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Senators Split Over Lemnitzer

By Lewis Hawkins
Associated Press

Gen. Lyman L. Lemnitzer's secret testimony on the Cuban invasion debate yesterday prompted Sen. Albert Gore (D-Tenn.), to call for his removal as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

But Gore's assertion that Lemnitzer and his fellow chiefs should be ousted drew quick opposition from other members of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee which heard Lemnitzer's account of the military role in last month's abortive invasion.

Gore left the closed session of the Latin American Affairs Subcommittee before other Senators and told newsmen:

"We need a shakeup of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I reached the conclusion on my own that we direly need a new chairman, as well as new members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff."

The Tennesseean said he based his conclusion on Lemnitzer's testimony but would not disclose what the Army General said.

Later, the Subcommittee Chairman, Sen. Wayne Morse (D-Or.), came from the hearing room and told reporters he has "complete confidence in the Joint Chiefs of Staff and their ability to protect the security of the country in connection with any military matter over which they have complete jurisdiction."

Of Lemnitzer's more than three hours of testimony, Morse said he was "as objective, candid, truthful and tallied as any witness I have heard in my years in the Senate."

Morse added he will recommend to the full Foreign Relations Committee that it ask the President for the privilege of discussing with the contents of the report made to date in the closed-door hearings at which the Department and staff also have been heard. Two Republican subcommittee members, Sen. Robert Capehart of Indiana and Bourke R. Hickenlooper of Iowa, were even more emphatic than Morse in rejecting Gore's suggestion. Capehart said: "I didn't hear anything in there that suggests we need to replace Gen. Lemnitzer any more than we need to replace the President or anybody else. They were all in this together."

Hickenlooper said "I have no feeling that we ought to discharge the Joint Chiefs." He added he doesn't want to blame anyone for the invasion fiasco until he hears further testimony and that so far it appears to him there were "some mistakes here, there and everywhere."

Another Democratic Subcommittee member, Sen. Frank Church of Idaho, subscribed to the idea the blame must be shared, saying:

"The question is not whether CIA or the Pentagon was to blame. Both advised the President that the plan was feasible. Both must share the blame, even though the President rightfully assumed the responsibility."